

**Board of Finance
Public Hearing Minutes
April 7, 2015**

Present: Michael Dougherty, David Fortin, David Hosmer, Glen Lessig, David Richardson, George McCoy, and Fred Chmura.

Absent: Mark Shamber and Ronald Cabana

Others: Treasurer Donna Stefanik, Deputy Treasurer Karen Fitzpatrick, Highway Foreman John Navarro, members of the Boards of Selectmen and Education, and approximately 10 interested citizens.

Chairman of the Board of Finance Michael Dougherty called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.

David Hosmer, seconded by George McCoy, motioned to seat Alternate Member David Fortin for tonight's meeting. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Mr. Dougherty read the call for tonight's Public Hearing.

David Hosmer, seconded by Fred Chmura nominated Attorney Ed Higgins as moderator for tonight's meeting. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Michael Dougherty asked that any questions or comments from the audience wait until after the presentations, be kept to three minutes, and that people remain courteous.

First Selectman Allan Walker presented the proposed General Government budget to the members of the Board of Finance and the audience.

Mr. Walker explained that the original request to the Board of Finance had been \$5,480,726.00. Since then the Board of Selectmen has cut \$94,438.00 from the budget, bringing the proposed budget to \$5,386,288.00. This is an increase of \$33,074.00 from last year's budget, or a 0.62% increase. The redemption of debt is \$498,128.00, bringing the General Government operational budget down to \$4,888,160.00.

The Capital Improvement Plan figure is \$10,850,650.00. This includes road and bridge projects and the school roofs.

Frank Baran, Superintendent of Schools, presented the Board of Education budget, updated as of April 7, 2015.

The proposed Board of Education budget is \$16,593,690.00, or an increase of \$101,924.00 or a 0.62% from last year's budget.

Some of the increases in this year's budget include tuition at Woodstock Academy, VOAG, Quinebaug Valley Middle College and Adult Education, electricity, technology services and equipment, software updates, bus leases, communications equipment, legal fees and professional services, and liability and property insurance.

Some of the decreases were in fuel costs, building maintenance, unemployment, worker's compensation and changes in Special Education programs and students moving out of the district.

After Dr. Baran's presentation, Mr. Higgins invited the audience to ask questions.

Preston Shultz believes that there is currently too much staff in the Highway Department and the Building Office compared to other area towns. He also feels that the General Government and the Board of Education budget should be "drilled down". As an example he stated that the Board of Education may put in the budget money for the purchase of boards in one year's budget, but that figure is still in the next year's budget. This should be taken out.

He also asked First Selectmen Walker if he could name the people at the Woodstock Town Hall who are taking the Health Insurance stipend. Mr. Walker informed Mr. Shultz that his Freedom of Information request is with the Town attorney, and he will get his information as soon as the attorney has determined what can legally be divulged to Mr. Shultz under HIPPA rules.

William French asks how much of a mil increase is expected with this proposed budget. Mr. Dougherty stated that it would be approximately 2/10ths of a mil.

Being no further questions Mr. Dougherty announced that the next Board of Finance meeting will be on April 21, 2015. The Annual Town Meeting will be on May 12, 2015 and the Referendum will be on May 19th.

David Hosmer, seconded by George McCoy motioned to adjourn at 7:25pm. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted
Christine G. French
Clerk